

A FANATIC'S CONVENT.

DEMOCRATIC SPEAKERS. Appointments Made by the Committee For the State at Large.

DR. JACQUES' PRIVATE RELIGIOUS
INSTITUTION IN MONTREAL.

Barbarous Rites Practiced in the Cloister—
Dire Forms of Self
Torture

One of the most mysterious and peculiar institutions that could exist in a modern age has just been unearthed in the heart of the city of Montreal, in the midst of French Catholics and French Catholicism. Women immersed in a private dwelling called a convent, their lives devoted to torture and self-sacrifice, cut off from the world, sleeping in coffins, shackling themselves in chains, small community entirely cut off from human ties, such is the private convent of Dr. Jacques.

The latter is a French physician, at one time having a good practice in Montreal, but years ago he became afflicted with what can best be called otherwise than a religious mania. Always of a phrenological turn of mind, Dr. Jacques has become insane on one point, that is to say, a religious institution where women tired of the world could expiate their sins and find heaven in scourgings and penitence.

The private convent founded in Montreal by Dr. Jacques has now come under the examination of the Roman Catholic authorities, and Cardinal Taschereau and Archbishop Faber, at the head of the diocese of Montreal, have decided to suppress the convent, which is situated in Amherst street.

Dr. Jacques for years past has labored under the illusion that a mysterious voice counseled him to start a religion institution. At first he did not dare to ask the permission of the authorities of the Catholic Church, who laughed at his plans and pronounced them impracticable. Dr. Jacques traveled through the greater part of Europe, all the time watching for ideas that would favor his scheme here.

He returned to Montreal in 1886, when the great smallpox epidemic was raging in Montreal and the people were dying by thousands. He went heart and soul into the work of saving the people, and it is said, attended himself 1,500 cases free of charge.

Among the families Dr. Jacques met was one named Aubin, from St. Jerome, who had come to Montreal with letters of recommendation to Dr. Jacques. They all took the disease, and the six girls in the family made a vow that if their lives were spared they would turn nuns. This was an opportunity for which the doctor had long been looking, and he immediately founded his convent. This was some eight years ago, and since that time the entire family has been inmates of this peculiar institution.

The sisterhood is composed of the six Aubin girls, and their father and mother act as caretakers and drudges for all kinds of work, while Dr. Jacques poses as the spiritual head of the institution. The eldest of the three sisters is the mother Superior, and is 39 years old. All wear, in the name of religion, a red habit, with a white veil.

Perpetual silence is enjoined, except during one hour of the day. The name attire at 4 o'clock in the morning and retiring at 8 P.M. At half-past 4 in the morning they pray for an hour before the cross, and at half-past 5 they attend in procession the St. James Catholic Church, in the immediate neighborhood, to recite the usual prayers and attend the usual devotions returning an hour afterwards. During the entire day they pray and sing hymns, even while attending the necessary housekeeping duties, which are few in number and as simple as possible. The food is of the plainest possible description, and the table utensils are of wood.

In the second story of the convent, which is a very modest wooden building, are the kitchen, the dining room and the "Hall of Exercises," which is decorated with flowers, quotations from the Scriptures, crosses, holy pictures, and all the accessories of a private chapel. At one end stands a wooden column four feet high, decorated with chains, scurries, a crown of thorns, and other instruments of discipline. The Holy Writ lies on a decorated stand, and a lamp is kept burning day and night in imitation of the chapel of Notre Dame de Lourdes.

On a few days and sometimes when, according to their ideas, the Lord has more reason to be offended at the behavior of man than usual, the greatest self-sacrifice and discipline is indulged in, and one of the Sisters is chained for a whole day and night to the pillar, fastened by the neck, the hands and the feet, while she wears the crown of thorns on her head. The Sisters take turns in this discipline.

Twice or thrice each week they scour themselves with a whip, composed of five leather strips, three feet long, in memory of the five wounds of our Lord on the cross, and they are compelled to administer to themselves 33 lashes in honor of the 33 years which our Lord passed on earth.

The dormitory is immediately under the roof and is divided into small cells. This is probably the most horrible portion of the house. In each cell there is an empty coffin, which serves as a bed for the Sister, and the only covering consists of a mortuary cloth. A little bench, with a pitcher and washbasin, go to make up the rest of her furniture, in addition to another small bench, which serves as a chair.

Except in case of illness each one of these girls, the youngest as well as the oldest, sleep on the bare wood without support for her head. When they are seriously ill their coverlet is put between them and the hard wood. At the end of the passage which divides the cells is a large cell for penitent girls—women of the world who wish to pass a few days in retreat and to expire sins committed. One of its ornaments is a skull, and while the penitents are compelled to wear haircloth next to their skin so as to continually remind them of their shortcomings.

The cell of Dr. Jacques, the spiritual head and founder of the institution, resembles that of the others, but contains, besides, a little pillow stuffed with grass collected by him at Notre Dame de Lourdes. In France, and ornamented on top with a picture of the holy face painted by a Carmelite nun at that place. This pillow is supposed to have been blessed by Pope Leo XIII. The institution is supposed to contain several relics of wonderful power, the principal of these being a medallion of the holy face removed from the Convent of the Precious Blood at St. Hyacinthe. This picture at different times is supposed to have been blessed.

Besides the apartments already mentioned the building contains a courtyard most fantastically built. The rear wall is arranged like the side of a rock, and contains a niche in the statue of the Madonna is visible. Each evening a candle lamp placed on the top of the niche throws a luminous glow over the face of the statue. A little further on is a grotto, the interior of which has been made into a little chapel, containing the statue of St. Jean Baptiste.

In the course of a statement made by Dr. Jacques it is said: "There is not the slightest doubt that the various authorities of the Catholic Church have sanctioned the institution for a long time past. It is a fact that Monsignor the Archbishop of Montreal has never officially given me authority to continue the institution, but he has never refused it, and I feel perfectly safe in my mind on that point."

The last development, however, seems to show that it is time to inform the Catholic authorities to break up forever this peculiar institution. Dr. Jacques still continues the practice of medicine, and as a physician is very popular among the poor of his district, but even the French Catholic papers are of the opinion that his private convent should be

sent away with Baltimore News.

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RENTALS.

EXCURSION TO THE WORLD'S FAIR.—A great advantage of the building owned by the Chesapeake and Ohio railroad, the Retreat for the Sick will give a ten days' EXCURSION TUESDAY, OCTOBER 24th, to the WORLD'S FAIR, PHILADELPHIA, for \$8 per day. It will include the following: Railroad fare to Chicago and return, board and lodging for six days, five entrances to the Fair, car fare to and from the Fair, drive about the Fair, admission to all the attractions on the steam launch, Guide Book. The sale of tickets will begin at the Retreat, 319 north Twelfth street, at 11 o'clock. H. A. CLAIBORNE, Principal Agent.

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EXCURSIONS.

ATTENTION, Pharmacists. The Virginia Board of Pharmacy will meet in Lynchburg, October 23rd. The examination of candidates will commence promptly at 10 A.M. and continue until 4 P.M. Those wishing to communicate as soon as possible, the Secretary, E. B. Beck, with Petersburg, Va. oc15-su4

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RENTALS.

DRESS-MAKING.

LADIES' AND MISSES' DRESSES

AS ABOVE DESCRIBED. Now is the time to purchase, and this is the place for you.

TERMS: Whilst the deed demands cash, yet, by consent, more liberal terms will be given at time of sale.

EDWARD S. ROSE,

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